

Message Text

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USMISSION USBERLIN

AMEMBASSY BONN

USMISSION USEC BRUSSELS

USMISSION GENEVA

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMCONSUL LENINGRAD

USMISSION NATO

AMEMBASSY PARIS

USDEL MBFR VIENNA

CINCEUR

CINCUSAREUR

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 MOSCOW 1943

FOR POLADS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, UR, US, GE, GW, WB

SUBJECT: THOUGHTS ON THE BERLIN POLICY ASSESSMENT

REF: STATE 8357, USBERLIN 164, BONN 1621

1. SUMMARY. FROM OUR LIMITED PERSPECTIVE, IT SEEMS THAT
1976 MAY BE A MORE CONTENTIOUS YEAR ON BERLIN ISSUES,
PRECISELY BECAUSE OF THE LIMITED MODUS VIVENDI WROUGHT BY
THE QA. NO PARTY WANTS CRISIS, BUT ALL PARTIES WILL BE
TEMPTED TO SAFEGUARD AND PROMOTE THEIR OWN INTERPRETATIONS
OF THE CITY'S STATUS, AND THIS TEMPTATION WILL BE HEIGHTENED
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FOR THE FRG BY ELECTORAL POLITICS AND FOR THE SOVIETS

BY SPECIAL SENSITIVITY TO GDR PRESSURES THIS YEAR. THE DIPLOMATIC AGENDA IS LOADED WITH OPPORTUNITIES FOR FRICTION ON BERLIN, WITH EC EXTENSION AND CSCE IMPLEMENTATION IN THE FOREFRONT. THESE FACTORS PLACE A PREMIUM ON GOOD SENSE AND GOOD WILL. INTER-ALLIED CONSULTATIONS SHOULD BE THE MAIN VEHICLE FOR PLAYING OUR PROPER ROLE AS A RELIABLE ALLY TO THE FRG ON BERLIN ISSUES, BUT GOOD ALLIES CAN ALSO OFFER GOOD ADVICE IN THE PRACTICAL CONTEXT OF STEPS UNLIKELY TO HELP BERLIN BUT ALMOST CERTAIN TO PROVOKE TENDENTIOUS SOVIET COUNTERTHESES, AND IT SEEMS TO US THE U.S. IS UNIQUELY QUALIFIED TO DO SO. REPETITION OF THE LAND BERLIN FORMULA IS ONE SUCH STEP, AS WE SEE IT, BUT OTHERS MAY COME UP WITH SIMILAR ISSUES. VIS-A-VIS THE SOVIETS, WE SUGGEST POINTING OUT TO THEM THAT THE IDEA OF CONFERENCES ON THE ENVIRONMENT, TRANSPORT AND ENERGY WILL RAISE BERLIN ISSUES IN A PARTICULARLY NASTY FORM. NO ONE DOUBTS THAT SOVIET INTENTIONS ARE MALIGN: THE POINT, AS WE TAKE IT, IS TO ENCOURAGE THE WEST GERMANS AND THE SOVIETS TO FIND MEANS TO KEEP THEIR RELATIONS ON AN EVEN KEEL IN A DIFFICULT YEAR FOR EAST-WEST RELATIONS IN EUROPE. END SUMMARY.

2. A FEW THOUGHTS FROM OUR NARROWER AND MORE DISTANT VIEWPOINT MAY COMPLEMENT THE FUNDAMENTAL CONTRIBUTIONS FROM EMBASSY BONN AND USBER.

3. IT SEEMS TO US THAT 1976 MAY WELL BE A MORE CONTENTIOUS YEAR FOR BERLIN ISSUES, PRECISELY BECAUSE OF THE STABILIZATION WROUGHT THROUGH THE QA:

--NO PARTY WANTS A CRISIS OVER BERLIN, AND YET BERLIN REMAINS A CRITICAL ISSUE IN EAST-WEST RELATIONS. EACH PARTY IS THEREFORE TEMPTED TO SAFEGUARD AND PROMOTE ITS OWN INTERPRETATION OF THE CITY'S STATUS.

-- THIS PUSHING AND SHOVING ON THE FRINGES OF THE QA WILL GET ADDITIONAL IMPETUS FROM ELECTORAL PRESSURES IN THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC.

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-- THEUSSR HAS A SUPPLEMENTARY INCENTIVE FOR "FIRMNESS": BERLIN REMAINS THE SYMBOL OF THE GDR'S QUALIFIED SOVEREIGNTY (AND "SECURITY PROBLEM"), AND THE EAST GERMANS WILL PUSH THE SOVIETS AS FAR AS THEY CAN ON QA INTERPRETATIONS. AND, ALTHOUGH THE SOVIETS ARE MORE INCLINED TO PRAGMATISM ON BERLIN THAT THE GDR, WE SUSPECT THAT THE OCTOBER 1975 TREATY, THE PREMIUM ON ORTHODOXY ATTACHED TO THEIR OWN PARTY CONGRESS, AND POSSIBLY A RESIDUE OF BAD CONSCIENCE

FOR HAVING SHOVED THE QA DOWN THE GDR'S THROAT WILL MAKE THE SOVIETS MORE SUSCEPTIBLE TO GDR PRESSURE IN 1976 THAN IN THE PAST, AND POSSIBLY THE FUTURE AS WELL.

4. THE DIPLOMATIC AGENDA FOR 1976 IS ALSO RICH IN FIELDS OF "NATURAL" EAST-WEST FRICTION OVER BERLIN. TWO IN PARTICULAR STAND OUT: EC EXTENSION AND CSCE IMPLEMENTATION. WHILE FRICTION ON EC EXTENSION IS A FUNCTION OF THE PACE OF EC INTEGRATION, CSCE IMPLEMENTATION IS WORKING AGAINST DEADLINES: THE 1977 BELGRADE MEETING, AND POSSIBLY THE CONFERENCES ON ENVIRONMENT, TRANSPORT AND ENERGY BREZHNEV CALLED FOR IN WARSAW DECEMBER 9. EVERY STEP IN THE EC INTEGRATION PROCESS, AND EVERY CSCE IMPLEMENTATION MEASURE INVOLVING THE FRG, AUTOMATICALLY FORCES UP THE QUESTION OF WEST BERLIN'S STATUS FOR A NEW ANSWER.

5. TAKEN SEPARATELY, NONE OF THESE FACTORS MAKES EAST-WEST FRICTION OVER BERLIN INEVITABLE IN 1976. THE NATIONAL INTERESTS WHICH IMPELLED THE SOVIET UNION AND THE FRG AND ITS ALLIES TOWARD A MORE STABLE MODUS VIVENDI ON BERLIN ARE STILL OPERATIVE. BUT THE DETENTE PROCESS OF WHICH THE BERLIN ACCOMMODATION IS A PART IS UNDER PRESSURE EVERYWHERE, AND THESE SPECIFIC FACTORS, TAKEN TOGETHER PUT A PREMIUM ON GOOD SENSE AND GOOD WILL IN APPROACHING ITS BERLIN COMPONENT.

6. IT SEEMS TO US THAT TIMELY AND SPECIFIC CONSULTATIONS AMONG THE FOUR WESTERN POWERS ON BERLIN ISSUES ARE THE MAIN--EVEN THE GOLDEN--KEY TO STABILITY. THEY ARE MUCH MORE THAN A DEVICE TO AVOID THE KINDS OF INTER-ALLIED MISUNDERSTANDINGS AND SKEWED PERCEPTIONS WHICH HAVE ARISEN OVER ESTABLISHMENT OF THE FEDERAL ENVIRONMENTAL OFFICE AND IN CONNECTION WITH INTER-GERMAN AND FRG-CONFIDENTIAL

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SOVIET NEGOTIATIONS. RATHER, THEY ARE THE VEHICLE FOR PLAYING OUR PROPER ROLE AS A RELIABLE, SUPPORTIVE ALLY OF THE FRG, AND FOR KEEPING THE ESSENTIAL LONG-TERM CONVERGENCE OF WEST GERMAN NATIONAL INTERESTS AND ALLIED RIGHTS IN GERMANY IN THE FOREFRONT OF ATTENTION.

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 IO-11 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 MOSCOW 1943

FOR POLADS

7. IN THE FIRST INSTANCE, THIS REQUIRES US TO SUPPORT THE FRG'S IRREPLACEABLE WILLINGNESS TO CARRY THE MAIN BURDEN OF OUR JOINT INTERESTS IN BERLIN. THE QA LANGUAGE PROVIDING FOR DEVELOPMENT OF TIES BETWEEN THE FRG AND BERLIN IS THE KEY TO THE CITY'S CONTINUED VIABILITY. WE MUST EXPECT THE SOVIETS TO MAINTAIN STEADY PRESSURE ON THE ALLIES CONCERNING FRG-BERLIN TIES, INCLUDING RESORT TO POTENTIALLY DAMAGING UNILATERAL INTERPRETATIONS LIKE THE ONE CONTAINED IN THE SOVIET-GDR TREATY. WE MUST NOT ONLY RESIST THIS PRESSURE, BUT ENCOURAGE FRG COUNTER-PRESSURE: NOT SO MUCH THAT IT CAUSES SERIOUS DETERIORATION IN FRG-SOVIET RELATIONS, CONFIDENTIAL

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BUT NOT SO LITTLE THAT IT ALLOWS THE SOVIETS TO SCORE POINTS.

8. AT THE SAME TIME, IT APPEARS FROM HERE THAT THE

UNITED STATES IS UNIQUELY QUALIFIED, AMONG THE FRG'S GOOD ALLIES ON BERLIN ISSUES, TO OFFER GOOD ADVICE, UNBURDENED AS WE ARE BY EITHER BRITAIN'S "EUROPEAN" PERSPECTIVES OR FRANCE'S SPECIAL DEFENSIVENESS OVER ITS GERMAN ROLE. THIS ADVICE SHOULD RELATE TO PRACTICE RATHER THAN PRINCIPLE, IN THE NARROW CONTEXT OF AVOIDING STEPS WHICH DO NOT BENEFIT BERLIN'S VIABILITY YET LEAVE THE SOVIETS LITTLE CHOICE BUT TO REAFFIRM THEIR TENDENTIOUS THESES.

9. ONE STEP WHICH MAY FALL IN THIS CATEGORY IS REPETITION OF THE LAND BERLIN FORMULA. THE FRG EMBASSY HERE TELLS US IT IS REPEATED EVERY TIME FRG CONSULS STAMP A VISA INTO A SOVIET PASSPORT, SINCE THE VISA STAMP COVERS LAND BERLIN. ACCORDING TO THE EMBASSY, THE FORMULA IS ALSO AFFIXED AS A MATTER OF NORMAL PRACTICE TO ANY NUMBER OF LEGISLATIVE ACTS ROUTINELY PASSED IN THE FRG EVERY YEAR, AND IS ROUTINELY PROTESTED BY THE SOVIETS. IT MAY WELL BE TOO MUCH TO ADVISE CHANGING THE VISA STAMP IN AN ELECTION YEAR, BUT IT MAY NOT BE TOO MUCH TO CONSIDER ADVICE CONCERNING THIS LEGISLATIVE PRACTICE. OTHERS ARE BETTER QUALIFIED TO IDENTIFY SIMILAR ISSUES--PERHAPS GERMAN NATIONALITY IS ANOTHER--WHERE REAFFIRMATION OF FRG JURIDICAL RIGHTS IS UNLIKELY TO ASSIST WEST BERLINERS OR OTHER GERMANS, AND PRACTICALLY CERTAIN TO PROVOKE OSTENTATIOUS SOVIET COUNTERTHESES.

10. VUA--VIS THE SOVIETS, WE MAY WISH TO CONSIDER THE POTENTIAL FOR FRICTION OVER BERLIN STILL HIDDEN UNDER THE SURFACE OF THE PROPOSAL FOR "ALL-EUROPEAN" DISCUSSION OF THE ENVIRONMENT/, TRANSPORT AND ENERGY. BREZHNEV MADE THIS PROPOSAL AT WARSAW DEC 9, AND THE SOVIETS HAVE SINCE SUCCEEDED IN WRITING IT INTO THEIR COMMUNIQUE WITH THE TURKS AND THE FINNS. IT BEARS HIS STAMP, AND IN ADDITION SERVES AS A SORT OF BASKET II COUNTERPOISE TO WESTERN PRESSURE ON BASKET III: WE HAVE NO DOUBT THE SOVIETS WILL CONTINUE TO PUSH IT IN EVERY SUSCEPTIBLE INTERNATIONAL CONFIDENTIAL

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FORUM. IT IS PREGNANT WITH CONTENTION OVER BERLIN, FIRST BECAUSE THE FEDERAL ENVIRONMENTAL OFFICE IS ESTABLISHED THERE, SECOND BECAUSE IT IS A "NON-SECURITY" TOPIC WHOSE BERLIN ASPECTS WILL BE MORE DIFFICULT TO CHANNEL INTO ESTABLISHED DIPLOMATIC GROOVES. CONSEQUENTLY, WE BELIEVE IT WOULD BE WORTHWHILE IN ANY DISCUSSIONS WITH THE SOVIETS ON THIS PROPOSAL TO MAKE CLEAR FROM THE VERY BEGINNING THAT WHATEVER ITS SUBSTANTIVE MERITS IT IS LIKELY TO RAISE BERLIN ISSUES, AND THAT WE WILL CERTAINLY BE TAKING THEM INTO ACCOUNT IN FORMULATING OUR POSITION.

11. THE POINT OF ANY SUCH ADVICE WOULD BE TO ENCOURAGE THE WEST GERMANS AND SOVIETS TO FIND MEANS TO KEEP THEIR RELATIONS STABLE IN A DIFFICULT YEAR. NO ONE DOUBTS THAT SOVIET PURPOSES ON GERMAN ISSUES OVER THE LONG TERM REMAIN MALIGN, OR THAT IN THE WAKE OF THEQA A QUIET BERLIN WILL EVENTUALLY BE A DEAD BERLIN, AS USBER 164 POINTS OUT. OUR SPECIFIC SUGGESTIONS HAVE A SHORTER-TERM FOCUS -- BERLIN IN 1976 -- WHEN THE MAIN INTEREST OF ALL PARTIES IS TO PREVENT BERLIN FROM SOURING SOVIET-FRG RELATIONS, AND THEREFORE EAST-WEST RELATIONS IN EUROPE.
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